



TOUGH 'OMBRE

90th Regional Readiness Command

Fall 2003

90th: Dust storm of activity for Iraqi, Enduring Freedom

THE RIGHT STUFF

Inside:

- First 90th KIA remembered
- Engineer, MP, quartermaster units shine

Table of Contents

Tough 'Ombre

Vol. 2, No. 1



Eddins hunts for WMD.....3



420th UA reflects on.....10
battle of Ia Drang Valley



Snapshots from the war.....14-15



Nobody gets to war
without the 1192nd.....17

New 'heroes' prep for basic training.....18

Submission deadline

December 15, 2003, is the deadline for submitting articles and photos for the next issue of the magazine. If you have questions, call Bob Williams at (501) 771-7900.

On the covers:

Front - Members of the 450th Chemical Battalion endure dust storm at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, before going to Iraq. Pictured are, from left: Lt. Col. Mark Lake, Capt. Matthew Fielder and Maj. James Stearns.

Back - Sgt. Brady Hill, squad leader for Company A, 489th Engineer Battalion, kneels next to display honoring Pfc. Jonathan Cheatham, the first soldier of the 90th RRC to die during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Submission of articles and photos by soldiers and other interested parties is encouraged. We prefer standard photos but will accept high quality digital photos, specifically TIF files of 300 dpi or better resolution.

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Chemical guru

Eddins plays key role in WMD hunt

By Maj. Keith Dover
46th MHD commander

Col. Glenn Eddins recently returned home after five months of duty at the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) headquarters in Camp Doha, Kuwait.

Eddins, who works as the full-time staff training officer for the 90th Regional Readiness Command headquarters in North Little Rock, Ark., was mobilized Feb. 2 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Eddins served as the senior chemical officer in theater, working for a general, quite a rapid change from his Deputy Chief of Staff G7 position on training weekends with the 90th.

Serving in that position was a huge responsibility for Eddins.

"I actually had two jobs," Eddins said. "First, I was the senior chemical officer in the CFLCC and was responsible for the chemical force structure and all related readiness issues, including all classes of supply. I had to ensure they were prepared for war. Later, this developed into the hunt for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and tracking all that activity, briefing Lt. Gen (David) McKiernan on the status of that operation.

"Second, I was the DCO of the Coalition Operation Protection Coordination Cell (COPCC) and had responsibility for the operational protection for Kuwait, with emphasis on chemical readiness."

Eddins said that during the build up and early stages of the war, everyone was interested in the plan for a chemical attack and the U.S. forces decontamination capability. Later, WMD became the driving force and Eddins was one of McKiernan's briefers during staff briefings. Eddins said they all got accustomed to donning their NBC gear when the missile alarms went off.

"It's pretty amazing just how fast you can put that stuff on when you think a missile's headed your way. Hell, when those alarms went off, we could put that stuff on quicker than a flash!"

Eddins said the typical workdays were long and exhausting at CFLCC, with most workdays beginning at 6:30 a.m. and ending somewhere around 10 p.m. in civilian time.

"I had a 0800 brief to Lt. Gen. McKiernan, a 0900 brief to the C-3 and a 1000 video teleconference with the command," Eddins said. "On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we had a



Photo Col. Glenn Eddins

Col. Glenn Eddins stands with a member of the security force team during his stay at Camp Doha, Kuwait.

2000 video teleconference with all the MSC C-3s and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, we had a 1900 briefing to the CENTCOM J-2."

He also talked about how their mission emphasis changed at one point from war business to the hunt for weapons of mass destruction until the time he left to come home.

Eddins said there were some positives about his stay there, including the living conditions.

"We lived and worked in air conditioning and ate A-rations," he said. "The mission was demanding, but I learned a lot about the Active Army. I couldn't have been in a better position, from a learning standpoint."

Eddins also spoke candidly about the negatives, "not getting out seeing the chemical troops in action," he said. He also told of how the dust storms were the most miserable moments. "I have never seen dust storms like that."

Eddins said they contended with many threats, including the threat of missile attacks on their compound.

"The Iraqi Army fired 28 scud missiles at Kuwait. Nine were aimed at Camp Doha where I was assigned," said

Eddins. "The greatest day was the day we destroyed the scud launcher north of Basrah. That was the one that shot at us every day for about a week and a half."

When asked about the problems they encountered upon arrival and the most trying times over there, Eddins said, "I was disappointed in the level of chemical readiness of the areas in Kuwait where we had troops. There were no decon plans at any of the five installations in Kuwait."

They did have successes, though as things changed before battle, Eddins said.

"I think I was very successful," Eddins said. "By the time the war started, all decon plans were in place, troops were trained, and all equipment and supplies were properly positioned. By the time the war started, everyone was well trained and ready to go." Eddins said there were many lessons learned and that the Army is in good hands with the younger generation.

"Our troops performed magnificently," he said. "Everyone had a great attitude and worked hard."

His advice to those facing future operations and mobilizations, "Your professional knowledge far outweighs how fast you can run or how many push-ups you can do."

Ride to the Sound of the Guns

These are challenging days for our Army Reserve family as many of our soldiers are mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Some are beginning to return home after completing their duty, but a large number remain deployed and more will surely be mobilized as the war continues.

Even with the difficulties that mobilization creates, our soldiers have responded magnificently to the call to duty. I could not be prouder than I am of the patriotism and professionalism that I see every time I am with a group of our soldiers. I remind them that what they are doing is very, very important for the security of our country. They understand the significance of what they are doing and are proud of their service.

Not all our mobilized soldiers are or will be deployed overseas. Those who remain in the U.S. still fulfill a very important role in supporting our warfighters. Never doubt the significance of your contributions no matter where you are assigned or what you do.

Recently, my wife Linda and I attended the 86th annual reunion of the 90th Infantry Division Association. Obviously, all 90th Division World War I veterans are now gone, but more than 300 World War II veterans and family members were present. Most of these great old soldiers are modest as they discuss what they did for their country almost 60 years ago but their contributions to keeping freedom alive for the world are well known.

I am so pleased to tell them how proud they would be of the

job that today's Tough Ombres continue to do. The legacy of the 90th Tough 'Ombres lives on.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the families of our soldiers who keep the home fires burning while a husband or wife or son or daughter or another family member is off serving on duty. Strong support at home is so important for the morale and well being of our soldiers.

We also don't want to neglect the needs of our family members. There is a very strong family support system in place for our families. Use it! You are not in this alone. Call on others who can help. Most of you are aware of the Family Support Group for your unit but if you are not, call your unit and get the information. If you can't find it, call us and we will tell you how to get in touch with them.

I regret that I am unable to thank every soldier and family member personally for what they are doing but I hope this message will convey my gratitude. On behalf of a grateful nation, I thank our soldiers and their families for their dedication and service. I wish for all our mobilized and deployed soldiers a safe tour of duty and a swift return home.

It's an honor to serve.

BG James R. Sholar
Ombre 6



'Bald Eagle' prepares 90th units for combat

By Staff Sgt. Shaughn Cullop
345th MPAD

CAMP BULLIS, Texas — The smell of gunpowder recently filled the air at this military training site outside the historic city of San Antonio, Texas. Soldiers of the 90th Regional Readiness Group were practicing military skills which could possibly save their lives or the lives of fellow soldiers.

'Operation Bald Eagle' is a concept conceived by Brig. Gen. Bruce D. Moore, 90th RRG commander. This operation re-taught soldiers who had not been deployed the critical battlefield survival skills they will need if they are mobilized.

Soldiers from 50 units of the 90th RRG were taken through soldier readiness processing, the first step in the mobilization process. During the SRP soldiers reviewed their medical and administrative records.

Soldiers were able to spend each of

the 14 days of OBE developing one combat skill. Refresher training included land navigation, convoy operations, first aid, NBC, battlefield survival skills, basic rifle marksmanship and checkpoint security. Second Lt. Ann Tran, 363rd Quartermaster Battalion, San Marcos, Texas, said, "This was good refresher training for soldiers to prepare them for war."

To challenge junior leaders, tasks were assigned that forced the leaders to devise their own plans of action to accomplish the tasks.

Compounding the leadership challenge, soldiers were randomly assigned to teams to integrate soldiers from different units. This experience made it more difficult to lead in new surroundings with new soldiers.

"It was a great experience," said Sgt. Yvette Trevino, 217th Transportation Company, San Antonio, Texas. She is an eight-year reservist. "I learned more here

about myself, soldier skills and leading soldiers than the whole time I have been in the reserve. I am more confident now for when I do get the call."

An especially moving moment in the exercise made the training activity even more relevant. As the soldiers stood in formation early in the exercise, 90th RRG Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie Coleman addressed them about a recent real-world tragedy. One of their 90th Regional Readiness Command's fellow soldiers had just died during a convoy operation near An Nasiriyah, Iraq. As the soldiers bowed their heads and shared a blessing for their comrade, the lessons they were about to learn took on additional emphasis.

Sgt. Sonia Barrera, also from the 217th, said, "Even though we did not know him (the soldier), I felt like we really did; he was one of us. It made all of us take things seriously. We all wanted to get our soldiers trained."



from the CSM's desk...

By Command Sgt. Maj. Roger Dale

In the month of August, I held a workshop for all Command Sergeants Major and First Sergeants of the 90th Regional Readiness Command. I chose topics for the workshop that I felt were both critical and timely. I want to discuss several of the topics covered in the workshop so all of you might gain something from this information. Topics covered in the workshop included: Army Knowledge Online, awards, military courtesy, Army Values, mentoring and conditional promotions.

Every soldier in the United States Army is supposed to be a registered Army Knowledge Online (AKO) user, and have an AKO e-mail address. AKO makes available a tremendous amount of information for the soldier. There is a "collaboration" section on AKO, which allows units all the way down to the company level to post information to AKO so the soldier can access it. The AKO log-in and password also allows the soldier to access My 2x Citizen, the Army Reserve Personnel Command Web page where personal information on each soldier is stored. This information can be used for putting together promotion packets, checking the status of security clearances and determining the expiration date of a physical.

One of the most important responsibilities of any leader is to ensure that awards are prepared and presented to deserving soldiers in a timely manner. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. Many times leaders become overwhelmed by events and do not get the paperwork filled out and submitted, time passes, and when the award is finally presented, many cannot remember exactly what the soldier did to receive the award. This greatly diminishes the impact of the award.

Another problem occurs when leaders do not accurately track soldiers who are approaching retirement; the soldier retires and leaves the United States Army Reserve without being recognized for a career's worth of service. This is an injustice to the soldiers and a leadership failure.

Military courtesy is another area that we must pay attention to at all times. Remember to render a hand salute to a commissioned or warrant officer; call attention when an officer walks into a room or approaches a group and come to parade rest when being directly addressed by a higher-ranking NCO. These are things that all of us as professional soldiers know to do, but sometimes we fail to carry through on them.

Another important responsibility of all leaders is to mentor those soldiers junior to us in rank or experience. We must prepare them for promotion; teach them the things they need to know to fill positions of greater responsibility. If we fail to prepare soldiers to take our place, then we have failed, period.

A continuing problem we face within this command is that of conditional promotions. Conditional promotions require the soldiers to be enrolled in the appropriate NCOES for that rank within one year and complete the course within two years. PLDC is the exception to this as it is a one-phase course and must be completed within one year. Failure to meet this requirement results in a revocation of the promotion order and reduction. Leaders must develop a tracking system that allows them to keep up with their soldiers who are conditionally promoted, when they are scheduled for school, and how prepared they are. This requires hands-on management and that is what NCOs do. Again, if we fail to do this we have failed, period.

Focusing on the above mentioned points will enable us to do a better job of taking care of those in our charge as well as being the professional soldier that we should be.

Soldiers Are Our Credentials!



Care Point

**By Chaplain (Col.) Ed Simpson
90th RSC Command Chaplain**

Redeploying soldiers across the 90th Regional Readiness Command are asking about an exciting, new seminar called PREP. PREP stands for Prevention Relationship Enhancement Program. It's a marriage enrichment seminar being offered to returning soldiers and their spouses.

The active army has offered PREP for several years and has found the principles to be a major factor in improving marriages, reducing divorce and strengthening relationships. PREP focuses on the common risk factors all couples face in marriage. Identifying these danger signs and learning how to listen

to your spouse's concerns can help prevent a marriage from falling apart.

PREP is built on several skills proven to be successful in developing lasting, loving marriages. Couples trained in PREP praise its affect: "...an outstanding class!" "A great course!" "This weekend was awesome!" The great thing about PREP is that it's free.

There is no charge for the training or the materials. How do you sign up? You can ask for PREP to be presented at your unit on a Saturday during a regular weekend drill, or you can enroll for one of the weekend retreats which are being planned this coming year (dates yet to be announced).

You may also call the chaplain's office at the 90th RRC for details about PREP and next year's schedule. Give your marriage a renewal weekend and new life. Call (501) 771-7811 for details.



887th wears various 'hats'



Photo courtesy 887th Quartermaster Company

Members of the 887th Quartermaster Company work on moving engines from the drain rack to the wash racks for processing back to the U.S. The unit has spent time in Kuwait and Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Unit staying busy with maintenance missions

**By Staff Sgt. Larry Mears
90th RRC Public Affairs**

The letter began, "We are not packing our bags to return to Texas. The previous orders to prepare and return have been modified and adjusted by our higher headquarters and a new mission has been given."

Capt. John Ernst, commander of the deployed 887th Quartermaster Company, Sinton, Texas, wrote these words in a letter to family members of the soldiers in his command.

While the news he was delivering may

not have been what everyone wanted to hear, he told family members, "It is clearly a time of change and uncertainty for troops on the ground. The orders, which are received today, are often changing tomorrow to meet the necessities and changing priorities of the Army. These changes are a requirement of war activities and an enemy which is always changing methods and positions.

"It is important for us to remember that the 887th has accomplished many great things to support the war effort in Iraq."

After arriving at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, on Feb. 12, the 887th, along with its Det. 1 from Alice, Texas, wasted no time.

Some of the missions completed during their deployment included designing and laying out the theater distribution center (TDC), which consisted of more than 2,000 connex (storage container) locations; establishment and operation of the general support class IX repair parts warehouse with more than 18,000 lines. It established a direct support maintenance operation for external customers to repair

for Iraqi Freedom mission

vehicles preparing for combat operations, as well as established and operated the Captured Enemy Equipment and Munitions collection point at Logistical Staging Area 'Adder' south of Baghdad. The unit also established and operated the Theater Retrograde Activity (TRA) for multi-class logistics for the entire theater.

The TRA consisted of more than 200 acres of open warehouse, which received more than 50,000 items during the first five months of continuous 24-hour operations. This one-of-a-kind venture was created without any training manual or model.

The 887th transformed a desolate, blowing desert to a supply "oasis" containing an estimated \$400 million of repairable and recoverable items for all branches of the military. The 887th supervised 146 soldiers, 150 contract employees and 100 third country nationals.

"These operations were established from scratch in the middle of the desert, with organic equipment, no utilities and very little support from theater resources," Ernst said.

Ernst feels very fortunate that there have been no major injuries.

"Our unit has been exceptionally lucky regarding injuries. Our biggest



Photo courtesy 887th QM BN

Lt. Col. Stephen Scott (left) and Capt. John Ernst hold captured weapons.



Photo courtesy Capt. John Ernst

As one of its missions, the 887th organizes and documents all captured enemy weapons, like those shown in this photo of AK-47s custom built for Saddam Hussein's army.

injuries in a total of 10 months were a smashed finger, two hernias and one PT injury. Other soldiers have had minor issues and returned to work."

He attributes that safety record to the use of risk management.

"Units must constantly assess all risks using a risk management worksheet and ensure that the NCO chain will enforce the matrix to standard for the safety of soldiers," he said.

Problems have arisen along the way, though. Ernst offers suggestions to future deploying 90th units.

"Computers are an integral part of company operations. Prior to deployment, key leaders and sections should be issued laptops," Ernst said.

He also mentioned an issue that could adversely affect the moral of the troops.

"The op-order deploying our unit directed each unit to bring MWR (moral, recreation and welfare) equipment. However, reserve units, unlike active component, have very limited equipment, time or method to purchase."

Ernst said that the Family Readiness Groups could benefit from a knowledge-

able officer attending their meetings.

"Families will no doubt ask challenging questions, but it is better for them to get a good Army answer, than to have rumors circling from one soldier's story to the next," he said.

"The plan to have 'boots on the ground' for a year might have come as a surprise, but the flexibility and adaptability of the Army Reserve is an invaluable asset. The 887th members will no doubt continue to perform their duties to the high standard, of which they can be so proud."

Ernst concluded his letter to family members by saying, "Before closing, I also wish to give a special thanks to the families who are picking up all the extra requirements at home. It is easy for us to think of our mission and forget all the tasks which spouses and children are forced to bear while the troops are away performing their duties. Please keep the mail coming, as the daily mail call is a highlight to soldiers each day."

A request that will more than likely be met with enthusiasm from family members back home.

420th Engineers rebuild

By Staff Sgt. Timothy Williams
211th MPAD

KABUL, Afghanistan – Members of the 420th Engineer Brigade participated in the reopening ceremony for the Kabul Military Institute (KMI) on Saturday, Sept. 13.

The institute had once been severely damaged during the Soviet occupation and the Taliban regime. The KMI construction projects were completed to ensure a beneficial learning environment for all medical students of the Kabul Province.

Currently, there are more than 4,000 students attending KMI, the premiere medical training school in the country of Afghanistan. This project is significant in that approximately \$300,000 has been spent to help restore educational facilities for the Afghan people. It also provides for the future of the Afghans and will facilitate improved health benefits and an overall quality of life.

“It is truly an honor for me to be here today on behalf of the United States Army, your partner in the reconstruction of this facility,” said Col. Donald Fuller, chief engineer of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJC-MOTF). “Today we witness another step forward for the Afghan government, and more importantly, for all Afghan people.”

Capt. Keith A. Dotts of the 420th is the project engineer of the CJC-MOTF, assigned to CJ7 Engineers in Kabul, Afghanistan, and was lead on the KMI project. Part of his responsibilities were to ensure all Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control (QC) were met by having the contractor meet all deadlines and to make sure all construction work was done correctly.

“The reconstruction of the Kabul Medical Institute will help out a lot and provide a better education for the students,” Dotts said. “The reception has been really good and the students and educators are very pleased, which is nice.”

Fuller added, “The government (of Afghanistan) is focused on rebuilding the infrastructure to improve the quality of life for its people, promote stability and raise the country’s standing in the international community.”

The projects include the rebuilding of 20 new practical laboratories as well as repairs to the medical school’s laborato-



Photo courtesy Capt. Keith Dotts

A team from the 420th Engineers was heading to a mission site one morning when it was hit by four IED mines at a choke point. Dotts said they were “very lucky” that no one was hurt.

ries. It also provided reconstruction of the water and heating boiler room. Other projects included painting the classrooms and upgrading the institute’s heating, electrical and plumbing systems.

In addition, they replaced doors and windows that were missing or damaged, and built desks and chairs. The contractors also provided many additional items to guarantee a quality learning institution well into the future.

“The process to renovate this institute is significant as it reflects the efficient workings of the new government. This facility now joins many other completed projects that have been restored in every part of Afghanistan,” Fuller said. “The renovation of the practical labs and the heating to this facility is an example of the Afghanistan government’s ability to provide for its citizens.”

Completion of this project has advanced the quality of edu-

war torn Afghanistan

cation and improved the community morale of the KMI. Not only has it significantly improved the educational environment, but more importantly, it allows all medical students to continue their education year-round.

The institute lacked adequate infrastructure space, electricity and water accessibility before being refurbished because of previous damages.

"Over the past year with the help and cooperation of the Central Government, the Coalition Forces have helped to improve the lives of Afghans and strengthened their resolve to become self-sufficient once again," Fuller said.

"This was a good project and it was good working with the two contractors and all the people involved," Dotts said. "We still have some work to do on the KMI project, but things have changed a lot and they'll continue to get better."



Photo by Pfc. Gul Alisan, 55th Signal Det., Fort Meade, Md.

Capt. Keith Dotts inspects the concrete pour of a small guest house at Nooreye Clinic in Kabul.



Photo by Spc. Nicholas Lutton

Capt. Keith Dotts directs traffic en route to job site in Kabul.

Medical clinic project keeps engineers busy

By Spc. Nicholas Lutton
211th MPAD

CJCMOFT, Kabul – If you had the opportunity to rebuild a country from the ground up, where would you begin? The engineers from the 420th Engineer Brigade assigned to the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operation Task Force believe the best way to start is by building clinics, hospitals, schools, roads and buildings which help the infrastructure of the country.

It is a long road back to becoming a strong country, but A. Assadullah Orya, contractor for the Nooreye Clinic, has worked in construction for more than 18 years and is positive it can be done. The Nooreye Clinic is a health clinic only a few miles from the king's old palace in Kabul.

The Nooreye Clinic has been a project with the engineers, or CJ-7, since April and was scheduled to be completed the first week of September. The U.S. and Romanian Armies are working together to bring this clinic to life.

U.S. Army Capt. Keith A. Dotts, Project Manager for the Kabul area and S-3 for the 420th Engineer Brigade, said his unit is keeping busy.

"We have 11 missions in the Kabul area and over 40 in the country of Afghanistan," he said. The CJ-7 team selects local contractors to work on these projects.

They begin with a bidding conference and from the conference, CJ-7 chooses 20 contractors. From the 20 contractors, CJ-7 chooses the best three based on past product quality. Next the engineers look at the cost of each contractor. The best quality at the best price is going to be the contractor chosen.

Romanian Army Capt. Valentin Ion Ghita, a civil engineer, said in addition to the clinic, they are scheduled to drill two wells and provide a generator for the clinic. These are essential because Kabul is considered the largest city in the world without public utilities.

420th SSA recalls...

'I was a soldier once...and young'

By Staff Sgt. Larry Mears
90th RRC Public Affairs

Most Americans – in and out of uniform – have probably seen or heard of the movie, “We Were Soldiers,” starring Mel Gibson as Lt. Col. Hal Moore. Moore co-authored the book from which the movie was taken.

Marvin Whittaker, supervisory staff administrator of the 420th Engineer Brigade, Bryan, Texas, lived the book and the movie as a young private.

The year was 1965; the country was ushering in a new era and saying goodbye to another. It was the year America decided to commit its troops to intervene in a previously obscure country called South Vietnam. Ultimately, the U.S. committed more than just its military assets. America was committed and, at times, divided over Vietnam.

The first major engagement in Vietnam occurred Nov. 14 in a place called the Ia Drang Valley. That is where soldiers from the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 7th Cavalry Regiment fought men from various regiments of the Peoples Army of Vietnam, then commonly known as PAVN, and later as simply the North Vietnamese.

Following two tours in Vietnam and a deployment to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm, Whittaker knows what fighting the enemy is all about. His many experiences and lessons learned would benefit all young soldiers.

When Whittaker enlisted in March, 1964, going to a war in Vietnam was not even a consideration. He had heard mention of it in the news but, as the rest of the country, had no idea the extent to which it would quickly escalate and involve him.

“I did well in basic training and was selected to go to the NCO academy. Then I ended up at Fort Gordon, Ga. training troops,” he said. “I had only been out of basic a couple of months myself. I got reassigned to Fort Benning, Ga., and became part of the 1st Cavalry Division.”

A new tactic was being developed at the time. “We were an air-mobile concept; mobility, speed, lethality. We were the best. We



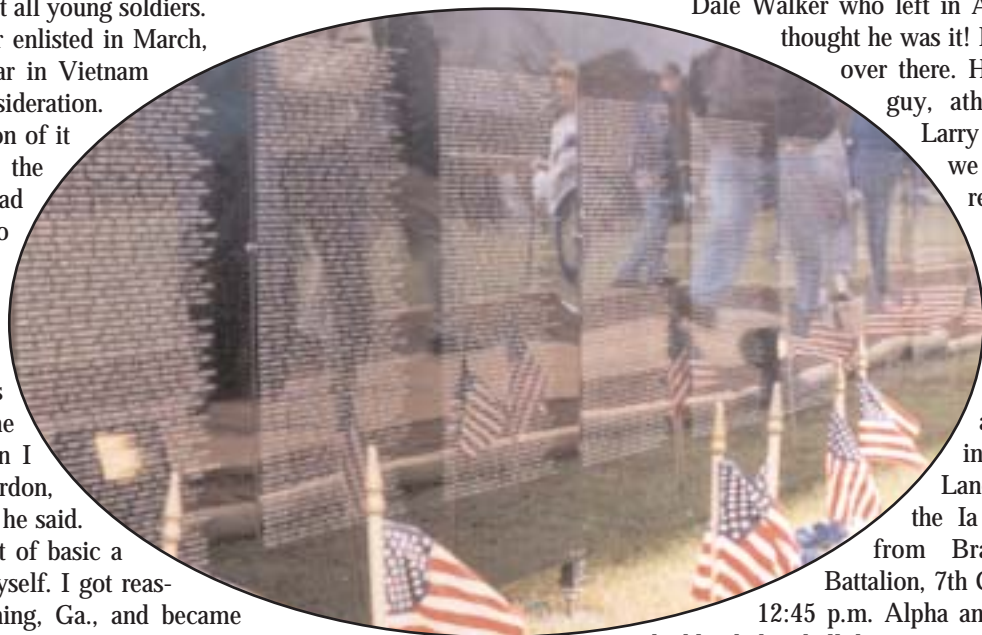
Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry Mears

Marvin Whittaker looks at the book, “We Were Soldiers Once... and Young.” Whittaker served with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment during Vietnam.

were told we were the best, we proved we were the best,” Whittaker proudly recalled.

The cavalry troops were highly motivated following their training and ready to test their new skills. “We all volunteered at one time or another for duty in Vietnam. I had a friend named Larry Dale Walker who left in April of ‘65. Boy, we thought he was it! He was anxious to get over there. He was a little stocky guy, athletic as hell. When Larry got to go to Vietnam we all envied him, we really did.”

Whittaker’s anxiousness to exercise his new skills was soon satisfied. He wasn’t far behind his friend. On Nov. 14 at 10:48 a.m., the first troops inserted by helicopter to Landing Zone X-ray, in the Ia Drang Valley, were from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. By 12:45 p.m. Alpha and Charlie Companies had landed and all three were actively engaged in bat-



tle.

Please see I on page 11



/ from page 10

A captured enemy soldier informed them there were three battalions of PAVN soldiers on the mountain desperately wanting to kill Americans.

Delta Company later arrived and the 1st Battalion fought the numerically superior adversary through the night. They relied on field artillery and mortar fire support and helicopter gunships to help them hold their perimeter.

Companies from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry were then sent in. "I was part of what happened after the 14th. We came in on the second and third days to take some pressure off the 1st Battalion. They had suffered pretty heavily, about 68 KIA (killed in action) and lots of wounded. We picked up the perimeter with them and held it that night.

"The next morning, the 1st of the 7th was pulled out along with our B Company. We stayed the last night. Then we walked out. We were going to LZ Albany. It wasn't that far, five to 10 kilometers I guess. We turned northwest and eventually came to Albany", Whittaker looking down while recalling these events, paused, swallowed hard, sighed, then continued.

"Thirty-seven years is a long time to sit and look at something and learn why it happened.

"We were pretty much strung out. The battalion had poor flank security. We were



Photo courtesy Marvin Whittaker

Whittaker takes a relaxing moment with the unit mascot, George.



Photo courtesy Marvin Whittaker

Marvin Whittaker steps off a plane in the U.S. after returning from Desert Storm.

tired as hell. Hell, we had all been up God knows how many hours and the guys were tired. A Company, 2nd platoon, which is what I was assigned to, was running point. The platoon cleared the LZ and went forward. The leadership all came back to one point; they had captured a couple guys; I believe it was the 66th PAVN Regiment," Whittaker took another long pause followed by a deep sigh.

"God, they just cut us to shreds! It ended up just little groups of Americans because we were strung out so far. They cut the column up. Shoot, you were all intermingled. There were about 400 people in the battalion at the time. We had 157 of us killed.

"The medic was a freckle-faced, red-headed kid, a real tall, skinny guy, 19 years old and he could work wonders. We lost all our medics except one." He paused and said, "There were seventeen of us in A Company left operational.

"The platoon leader committed suicide in '96. Another guy died of alcoholism," Whittaker painfully recalled as he reflected on the Ia Drang's effect on its soldiers.

Ironically, Whittaker saw action before his friend, Walker, whom he had envied for being there first. Walker had been assigned to a security platoon at Camp Holloway, an Army airstrip.

"After the Ia Drang we got most of our dead out to the old tea plantation. From there we got them up to Camp Holloway and got them in the reefers," Whittaker said, referring to Army's mortuary refrigerators.

"Larry knew a lot of them. He saw a lot of the dead guys. We came out of the field

and went back to Camp Holloway. I looked him up and we sat and bawled and drank and drank and bawled. He immediately wanted to get out of that assignment and get to a combat assignment. I told him he was nuts.

"He ended up getting a job at the 1st Infantry Division and on Easter Sunday, '66, Larry Dale got his back broken in action."

About seven years later Whittaker was able to track Walker's telephone number and gave him a call. "He got on the phone and I said, 'Hey Bird,' and he said, 'Who is this,' I said, 'this is Lurch,' he said, 'Is this some kind of sick joke,' I said, 'No, this is Whittaker.'"

Whittaker visited Walker. "You've got to understand this guy was a muscular kid, he was always very athletic." When he saw Walker after so many years, he was shocked how his friend had changed, "Shoot, he wasn't any bigger around than my wrist. Of course, he was crippled and didn't have use of his legs at all. I just reached down and picked him up and hugged him. We bawled.

"Larry and I wrote each other and called each other for a few months after that, but it got kind of awkward. We just couldn't talk about it anymore.

"He is a guy who gave his all and he went through so much hell. He was a soldiers' soldier. These kids today have the same spirit Larry had," Whittaker said.

"After the Ia Drang it was very difficult for a lot of us to stay in the battalion and function. I had problems with my leg, so I

Please see I on page 25



A hero falls



Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry Mears

Representatives of the 90th RRC join family members of Spc. Jonathan Cheatham at funeral.

90th, family honor 489th's Cheatham

By Bob Williams
90th RRC Public Affairs

"I will fight for you. I will die for you. But my death will not be in vain."

Dr. Barbara Porchia of Camden, Ark., was reading words sent to her by her son, Pfc. Jonathan M. Cheatham, at his funeral on Aug. 3 in the Camden Farview High School gymnasium. More than 700 people had gathered to honor Cheatham, who had died in an ambush of a convoy from Company A, 489th Engineer Battalion outside of Baghdad. Company A, from Hot Springs, was ambushed by small arms and rocket propelled grenades which also wounded two other 489th soldiers.

The battalion is assigned to the 420th Engineer Brigade, a major subordinate command of the 90th Regional Readiness Command. Cheatham was the first soldier from the 90th to have been killed since mobilizations began.

Porchia read a letter partially composed of statements made by her 19-year-old son and the remainder that she had composed as part of a political statement she was making at her son's funeral.

Cheatham, a 2002 graduate of the Camden school, had been an outstanding and very popular student who had been offered a music scholarship to attend college. Instead, he chose the military because, as he told his mother, "I've joined the Army. I'm becoming a real man, learning the honorable way and doing the honorable things a man should do — loving my God, loving my family and loving my country."

The funeral ceremony conducted by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Larry Barber, assistant 90th chaplain, included film clips showing highlights of Cheatham's life, especially his life in high school. A collage of pictures of his life was in the lobby.

Brig. Gen. James R. Sholar, commanding general of the 90th, presented the Purple Heart medal and the Bronze Star for meritorious service to Porchia. The Purple Heart medal is the Army's oldest medal and is awarded for wounds or death as a result of hostile fire. The general also presented Cheatham's posthumous promotion to specialist.

Barber said that Cheatham had served his country proudly. "Jonathan was doing what he thought was right," he said. "His



Photo by Bob Williams

Firing squad from the Field Artillery Center at Fort Sill, Okla.

death was a tragedy, but his life was not a waste."

Porchia's poignant statement to the mourners reflected her feelings about the continuing debate in Congress concerning funding the war in Iraq. She said her son had told her in one of their conversations that it did not matter whether a U.S. soldier was a Republican or Democrat. "We soldiers are one. Why can't politicians join forces as one?"

"I've joined the Army now! I'm becoming a real man, learning the honorable and doing the honorable things a man should do - loving my god, loving my family and loving my country. I will fight for you. I will die for you. But my death will not be in vain. America will give its unequivocal support of our troops until our mission is complete."

**--Spc. Jonathan Marshall
Cheatham**

She recalled that he had told her, "If one of my battle buddies goes down, do you think I will touch him on his shoulder and ask him if he is a Democrat or Republican? If a missile is fired at us, do you think we will discuss if it came from the weapons of mass destruction before we duck? The answer is no to both."

"We are soldiers, Mom. We're out there fighting for what we believe in and it doesn't matter about Democrats or Republicans or weapons of mass destruction."

She then mentioned America's greatness as a nation, the troubles the soldiers in Iraq have with the enemy and the weather, then said, "We need to stand firm and come together as one, if only the political parties would stop blaming one another regarding the war. Let's not play politics with the lives of our troops."

Porchia concluded in a quivering voice by saying, "Our soldiers are willing and ready to complete this mission. Let's not allow the lives of our fallen soldiers to be in vain."

She wiped the tears from her eyes and returned to her seat as the audience stood and applauded.

The four-mile route from the high school where Cheatham had spent so many happy days to the beautiful cemetery with rolling ground and the surrounding high trees was lined with citizens of Camden standing approximately 100 feet apart.

Each was holding an American flag and, as the hearse passed, they placed their hands over their hearts and waved their flags. The people lining the route were all ages and of all ethnic groups. Some wore veterans' uniforms, some wore scout uniforms, and most were in civilian clothes on this blazing hot day. Each was trying to honor the well-known young local man killed in a violent action halfway around the world.

The graveside services were very precisely performed by an honor guard from the U.S. Army Field Artillery Center at Fort Sill, Okla. The sound of the 21-gun salute echoed among the trees and was followed by the sad sound of Taps. Many in the crowd were almost overwhelmed by grief. Sholar presented the carefully folded flag to Cheatham's younger sister, Portia, who was sobbing on her mother's shoulder.

The words of Cheatham's mother remained with the people as they departed in the form of a tribute she had placed in the funeral program. She had written, "I rejoice in knowing that your battles are over. You fought a good fight; you are my hero."

"We need a unified front in our homeland, including politicians, and we need sound decisions made quickly to finish this war. Let's not be so hasty as to divide the spoils of war to the private companies before our military objective is achieved. Let's not wait for the election or re-election of certain politicians before we allow our military to accomplish its mission in Iraq. Let's not play politics with the lives of our troops."

--Porchia Cheatham

Taking a break fr



om war



Saying hello

Soldiers with the 90th RRC are participating around the globe in the War on Terror. Some of those soldiers are in these snapshots taken at various locations. Pictured are, clockwise from top left: Spc. Charles H. Burch III, 827th Quartermaster Co.; CW2 Scott Scott Stoore (left) and Sgt. 1st Class John McKinney, 887th Quartermaster Company; Capt. Scott Richards, 827th Quartermaster Co. (shown with friend); Maj. Catherine Cyran, 316th Quartermaster Battalion; Spc. Maria Gonzales, 887th Quartermaster Co.; Spc. Jarrod Stroud, 489th Engineer Battalion



TOUGH 'OMBRE SPORTS

He's always 'Reddie'

468th's Johnson tackles bad guys

By Spc. Brian Raley
343rd MPAD

Spc. Jayvian Johnson has played football most of his life and is used to wearing a uniform and being part of a team. Now, he is wearing a very different uniform and "playing" for a much larger team, with a much larger goal as an American soldier participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"He started playing football in the seventh grade and he has loved it ever since," said Bobbie Johnson, his mother in Little Rock, Ark. Playing college football has been Johnson's dream since he started pursuing the sport. Just as he started living that dream as a running back for the Henderson State University Reddies, he was mobilized with the 468th Chemical Battalion, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Little Rock.

"It was a big surprise and a big shock

"I have changed, in that I am so much more humble. I have gotten closer to the Lord, which is always a great thing."

—Spc. Jayvian Johnson
468th Chemical Battalion

to all of us," Johnson said in an earlier Associated Press story. "All of a sudden I got called up. But I signed the papers, so I realized there was nothing I could do about it."

Johnson is proud of his service to his country, but he said in a recent e-mail interview from Kuwait that he is ready to come home.

"I feel proud about being deployed over here, but now I feel like a lot of people do, that it is time to leave," he said.

"Hell, we have been here since the war started. We need a break.

"I have changed, in that I am so much more humble," he said of his experience to date. "I have gotten closer to the Lord, which is always a great thing. I also miss the people, all the fellas and the coach."

What does he miss the most about home?

"At home, I control what I do most of the time and do what I want to," he said. "I miss the competition, competing for a spot on the team and winning it. One other thing – I could use is a clean toilet."

Johnson's mother is more than ready for him to come home, but she knows that he is doing something to which he is committed and she is proud of him for that.

"I feel proud that he is in Kuwait. Its something he decided to do," she said. "I think being deployed will make Jayvian a better player and a better person. He is ready to come home and get right back in the mix of football and school. He works out as much as possible to keep in shape so he can come back ready to play."

Johnson played high school football for North Little Rock, Ark., Ol' Main High and was very successful. His senior year he rushed for more than 1,000 yards and was The Associated Press' Arkansas Player of the Week after putting the Charging Wildcats in the playoffs with 331 all-purpose yards in the 1999 regular-season

finale.

Given his statistics, one would think he would be a sure prospect for almost any college team in this region, but that was not the case. Johnson spent two years trying to find a college team to call home, but nobody was interested. Colleges were hesitant to recruit him because of his 5-foot-4 frame.

After some thought, Johnson realized there was a team that would take him and help him go to school no matter what his height. So, like many in the military now, he went to his local Army Reserve recruiter to discuss his education options. Soon, he was shipped off to basic training and advanced individual training to become a supply specialist for the 468th.

Following his basic and advanced training, Johnson started taking college classes at Pulaski Technical College in North Little Rock and at the same time started playing flag football in a league that included players from the Arkansas Twisters, an Arena 2 football team.

He held his own with the older players, which motivated him to continue his search for that college football team jersey he had dreamed of since childhood.

Please see REDDIE on page 19





Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry Mears

Among other ports during mobilization, the 1192nd was tasked to load the Army's new Stryker Brigade in San Diego.

All aboard

1192nd at many ports during mobilization

By Staff Sgt. Larry Mears
90th RRC Public Affairs

When the Army needed to move the new Stryker Brigade from the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., it tasked the 1192nd Transportation Terminal Brigade to make it happen.

The 1192nd, from New Orleans, has played a key roll in the current Global War on Terrorism. After being placed on alert Jan. 16, unit members were then sent to Corpus Christi, Texas, on annual training orders before being mobilized on March 1.

Of the 115 soldiers mobilized with the 1192nd, 24 went to San Diego, Calif., for temporary duty to load the 984-foot long Bellatrix, a Navy Fast Sealift Ship, with a myriad of very large equipment. This mission was just one example of more than 70 load missions the 1192nd has performed during its highly active mobilization. They have loaded over 60,000 pieces of equipment in almost 10,000,000 square feet of cargo space at ports worldwide.

The equipment belongs to the Army's first and only Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, based at Fort Lewis, Wash. The unit was being certified. After completing the operational evaluation at NTC, the SBCT moved to the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., where 1192nd personnel off-loaded it.

Working day and night in 12-hour shifts, members of the 1192nd prepared the load plan, pre-positioned equipment and

ensured all aspects of the load were completed safely and efficiently, tasks at which they have become very proficient.

Personnel assigned every piece of equipment a number and position on a computer. A printout of all five decks, called a footprint, is then used to visualize where each piece will go.

"This was supposed to be a gravy mission but I haven't had a day off yet," Staff Sgt. Joseph Clay said.

Many unique considerations come with loading a ship. If the load is not balanced, neither will be the ship. "We will load two areas simultaneously and meet in the middle," said Maj. Ernesto Mora.

The Army is a combat force, but without the support of transportation units, it would have an impossible mission. The combat troops would be totally ineffective if they and their equipment never arrived.

Staff Sgt. Myra Johnson is an elementary school principal when she is not mobilized. She calls and speaks to her students when she can.

"Often, when I speak to my students, they say, 'Ms. Johnson, do you have to shoot guns?'" she said. "I tell them, 'No, when you see the equipment being loaded on and off the ships, that's what I'm doing.'"

That, plus helping soldiers worldwide fight the War on Terrorism.



Training future 'heroes'

90th preps raw recruits

By Staff Sgt. Larry Mears
90th RRC Public Affairs

Recruiters have a challenging job convincing young people who have, in some cases, more enticing job opportunities that the Army Reserve is the best choice. After recruits enlist, units then face the challenge of retaining them and ensuring they ship to basic training.

That challenge was the inspiration for a new program started by the 90th Regional Readiness Command.

Master Sgt. Donna Majors, formerly of the 46th Military History Detachment, helped develop the course. After a Command Assistance and Assessment Program visit to a subordinate unit, she and Maj. Max Balitico, formerly assigned to the 90th, determined a need existed for a course to help prepare soldiers for basic training and their careers.

"We were discussing the alarming number of soldiers who enlist and do not ship to basic and an even more alarming number of soldiers who leave the reserves within the first 1-3 years of their enlistment," Majors said.

Thus, the Hometown Enlisted Reserve



Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry Mears

Fellow students watch Pvt. Brenda Garcia break down an M-16.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Larry Mears

HERO students receive Nuclear, Biological and Chemical instruction.

Orientation (HERO) class was born. The initial class featured 53 students from various 90th units. The mission statement of the HERO program: To enhance the knowledge of pre-basic training soldiers by providing the skills and information needed to excel during basic training and as drilling reservist.

Four drill sergeants supervised the intensive course over a three-day period. The drill sergeants, who are assigned to the 95th Training Division, taught the students what to expect in basic training.

The program's purpose is to motivate new recruits by giving them a sample of what basic training will be like. This initial exposure is designed to give them an advantage when they arrive at basic.

Among the classes taught were the history of the 90th RRC, military courtesy, proper wear of the uniform, rank structure, NBC, weapons and equipment, bonuses, benefits, pay and Army values.

Recruits were introduced to physical fitness, as well. Students became familiar with the front leaning rest position on the first day of training. One drill sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Gould, motivated the students during this session.

"While you're sitting at home playing

play station, eating Ding-Dongs you're just hurting yourself," Gould told them.

The Training Integration Group for Enhanced Readiness (TIGER) Team was assembled to plan the course.

"The most important single task that I had to do to make this program a success was to find the best person I could to run the team," Majors said. She chose Master Sgt. Roland Black of the 90th and he hand-picked the other team members.

"Our goal is to eventually have a class going each month somewhere within the command," Black said. In fact, a second class recently finished at Camp Pike. An evaluation after the first class led to improvements. Black said that the program would improve as it evolves.

The drill sergeants were very excited about the program.

"These kids are going to be leagues ahead of the rest of the recruits just off the street," said Gould, the senior drill sergeant.

The next scheduled class is at Camp Robinson in February. One hundred seats are available and officials said they go fast. For more information contact Black at (501) 771-7835 or by e-mail at Roland.Black@usarc-emh2.army.mil.

After two years of searching for a college team and joining the Army Reserve, Johnson received the call he had been waiting for. Bill Lafear, Johnson's position coach in high school, had been fighting since Johnson graduated to get him considered by Henderson State in Arkadelphia, Ark.

"I said they would be making a big mistake if they didn't take him and I think they realized that," Lafear said. "I think they're glad they got him now."

In the third game of his first season at Henderson State, Johnson showed his team that he was well worth the investment and rushed for 110 yards, one of three 100-yard performances he had for the season. Johnson finished the campaign with 731 rushing yards and finished ninth in the Gulf South Conference in rushing. Things were going well.

Two weeks into his next semester, things changed. Johnson's Army Reserve unit was mobilized. He was first sent to Fort Hood, Texas, for training and has been in Kuwait since March.

Johnson's job as a unit supply specialist is a key part to the defense of his unit. He has a very broad spectrum of duties assigned to him, including basic supply duties as well as some maintenance tasks.

"My job is to fix and repair weapons and armor," Johnson said. Supply specialists, though they are not normally at the front line, often work long hours to ensure everything is prepared and soldiers have what they need to perform their missions. However, he said he is given some free time occasionally for a little bit of fun. "I go to the gym a lot and that helps me relieve a lot of stress. I also play NCAA 2004 on Playstation 2, along with Madden and NBA 2k4."

No matter what he does to pass the time while deployed, he can't keep his mind off of what he has waiting for him at home. "My mother as well as a 'special lady' at home are my motivation. They keep me looking forward to a fun return."

The majority of Army Reservists serving in the Middle East perhaps feel as Johnson does. He is ready to come home, but he will not let this deployment dampen his determination to play football.

"If I have to wait until the spring, that will be fine," Johnson has said. "Waiting a couple more months isn't going to hurt me at all. It's just going to make me that much more determined."



Photo courtesy Capt. John Ernst

Terminator meets 887th

Some members of the 887th Quartermaster Company got to meet California governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger during their mobilization to Kuwait. Members of the unit are in the front row. Pictured are Spc. Crystal Perez (second from left), Sgt. Joshua Landin (third from left), Sgt. Charles Keating (second from right) and Sgt. Michael Watson (far right).

New CBT improves bridge operations

By Lisa Cunningham
343rd MPAD

Instructors from Dimensions International, Warren, Mich., and soldiers from the 739th Engineer Battalion, Granite City, Ill., recently spent a week at Engineer Lake at the Fort Chaffee, Ark. They were training employees of the Equipment Concentration Site 15 on the new Common Bridge Transporter (CBT).

The new CBT is an improvement from the old CBT, according to Buck Mathews, a Dimensions instructor. Several students participating in the training said that the new equipment is more soldier friendly.

Instructor's from Dimensions International said that several differences exist between the old and the new CBT. The old one required a three or four man crew, where a one or two man crew can operate the new CBT. The old CBT used a cable to lower and raise the bridge section or boat.

The CBT was designed only to transport a bridge section or boat. The controls were harder to learn and involved several steps, which made the deploying of the equipment very time consuming. The cable had to be closely watched because it presented several possible dangers to the soldiers.

The new CBT uses a mechanical arm to lower and raise the equipment. Its arm can be operated by controls from inside the CBT, as well as from a remote control outside.

With the remote control, the new CBT can lower and raise the equipment with one person and in much less time versus the older model. The improved CBT also has fewer controls and is easier with which to train. It is much more versatile than the old one. It can transport equipment other than the bridge section or boat.

The big dig

808th sets Army pipeline record

By Spc. Brian Raley
343rd MPAD

The soldiers the 808th Engineer Company really dig their job.

The Houston, Texas, soldiers recently had the skills and motivation needed to complete a challenge and mission that ended in an Army first.

The 808th, a pipeline construction unit, provided key support to the 62nd Combat Engineer Battalion of Fort Hood, Texas, during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Their pre-war mission was to help the 62nd construct the Inland Petroleum Distribution System, or IPDS in preparation for an attack on Iraq. This mission was critical and hopefully the attack would not take place until the system was complete.

The IPDS was to go from Camp Virginia, Kuwait to Breach Point West, on the Kuwait-Iraqi border, before the war was to begin and the 808th had the expertise needed to get the job done.

"Our sole mission was the placement of the IPDS," said 1st Lt. Brian Williams, 808th commander. "We played the role of technical experts for the most part and gave advice as much as possible to stop mistakes made prior to our arrival. We focused a great deal on pump station installation and the fill and test mission, which is the most technical part of the entire operation.

"Our involvement saved the battalion weeks in construction time, but I will say that all of the companies under the 62nd in Iraq contributed 110 percent," said Williams. "It was a hard mission, and it required lots of coordination and team effort."

With the help of the 808th, the 62nd finished the mission ahead of schedule and was ready to tackle its next mission, which started only a few hours after the ground war began.

The goal of constructing this fuel system was to keep a fast moving supply of fuel to the front lines in support of the forward attack and that mission was completed successfully.

The end result was the construction of the largest ILDS ever built by the U.S. Army. It stretched 236 miles from Camp Virginia, Kuwait to Cedar II, north of LSA Adder in Iraq.

The soldiers worked with more than 65,000 pieces of pipe, weighing approximately 4,500 tons.

"We were extremely successful. We were able to complete our mission in war time. The pipeline engineer companies are supposed to be attached to a combat heavy unit as the technical experts, and we did it!"

The 808th arrived in theater on March 2 and were demobilized on July 5. They made it home July 11. Williams was there for four months and he said every morning started out the same.

"You wake up and dig the sand out of your fourth point of contact," Williams said. "There was not a typical day. Depending on the mission, we would be spread out over 100-150 miles at any given time. Chow was MRE every meal the first 30 days. It was hot.

"It was a hard mission," Williams said. "It required lots of coordination and team effort. Everyone in the unit grew as a person in character and mental toughness."

One of the hardest things endured by his soldiers was the lack of communication with loved ones at home, Williams said.

"In Kuwait we lived in base camps, and there were phones that you stood in line from 10 minutes up to four hours to



Photo courtesy 808th Engineer Company

One section of the more than 230 miles of pipe the 808th Engineer Company laid while deployed.

get a 15 minute call," he said. "In Iraq it was seldom to call home, until cell phones became more available. You could buy them in Kuwait. On the whole, the company made do and helped the people who had more of a problem gain access.

"It was stressful. Some took it well and others did not," he said. "We, as a whole company and battalion, kept an extremely high tempo for the duration and that helped with morale. A busy soldier doesn't have time to think about home."

While keeping busy might occupy soldier's minds and keep them from dwelling on loved ones at home, there is one thing

Please see *HATS* on page 21

900th collects food service's highest award

An old adage says that an army marches on its stomach.

If that is the case, then members of the Army Reserve's 75th Combat Support Hospital and the 900th Quartermaster Company should be dancing through the trenches.

The 75th, located in Tuscaloosa Ala., and the 900th, located in El Paso, Texas, were recently named as the best field kitchens in the Army Reserve. The mess sections of the two units received the Army's highest food service award – the Phillip A. Connelly Award – during the Joint Services Excellence in Food Service Awards held in late August. The program also recognized the best food service operations from the active Army, National Guard and other Department of Defense services.

Changes in Army Reserve food service procedures in recent years, namely the great reduction in soldier-cooked meals during drills, limits USAR units to competition in the field kitchen category, said Edward Siegler, a food service specialist at



Sgt. 1st Class Charles Gruntz (left) and Sgt. James Bender accepted the Connelly Award after their field kitchen at the 900th Quartermaster Company was selected as the runner-up for this year's award.

U.S. Army Reserve Command.

"Surprisingly, although our units are cooking less, we had more competitors for this year's award than in previous years," Siegler said.

The 900th and the other competitors were judged on a long list of criteria including safety, cooking ability and cleanliness, Siegler said. "It is sort of like figure skating. You start with a perfect score and then subtract as deficiencies are found," Siegler said.

Although food service has progressed from the days of soldiers spending all day peeling mounds of potatoes, it still takes a big effort to put food on soldiers' plates, Siegler said. "We are not just opening containers and heating food in a microwave. The rations are packaged more efficiently but they still have to be cooked. There is still a lot of room for artistry in the kitchen and soldiers really appreciate it when their cooks do a good job."

HATS from page 20

that could not be escaped, other than the sand.

"It was hot. The typical temperature was about 125 degrees during the day and 90 degrees at night. The hottest day was 151 degrees two days before we came home," Williams said.

Though conditions made it tough on his soldiers, the 808th soldiers had good times along with the bad. It was not all bad, said Williams.

"In the evening we had some fun in base camp. We had boxing most nights, three rounds of one minute. It was pretty exciting for the soldiers," he said. "We also had movies and X Boxes to fill the nights. But the most exciting moments for a soldier were mail call and phone time.

"For me personally, it was the nighttime," Williams said. "My first sergeant, the construction sergeant and I would sit outside the tent late at night and talk over

events, among other things. Some nights the battalion commander and battalion command sergeant major would join, and that was even more fun."

William's soldiers went through good times and bad times, but the best thing of all was them getting home with everyone accounted for.

"I think that our largest success was not in mission completion but in mission completion with no major injuries or attacks," Williams said. "We always positioned ourselves in a way to thwart enemy action against us. We always maintained a high degree of readiness in convoys and on project sites," Williams said. "The Marines shot at us one day by accident. They were cleaning barrels in the helicopter, but no one was injured. It opened our eyes as to how 'friendly fire' happens."

The 808th helped complete a mission critical to the start and completion of the

attack on Iraq and they showed how vital a role Army reservists play in combat.

"The Army Reserve and National Guard make a huge difference and bring more to the theater than more bodies," he said. "The Reserves are made up of all walks of life and they bring more than a small set of skills with them. They are able to integrate and work along side of active duty soldiers to the point that you cannot tell the difference. You would have been hard pressed in our battalion to tell the difference between the active component soldiers and the reservists."

The 808th was sent to Iraq to complete a vital mission. They were the experts in their field and their knowledge enabled the 62nd Combat Engineer Battalion to meet every deadline early.

Working with the 62nd, they produced the longest Inland Petroleum Distribution System the U.S. Army has ever built.

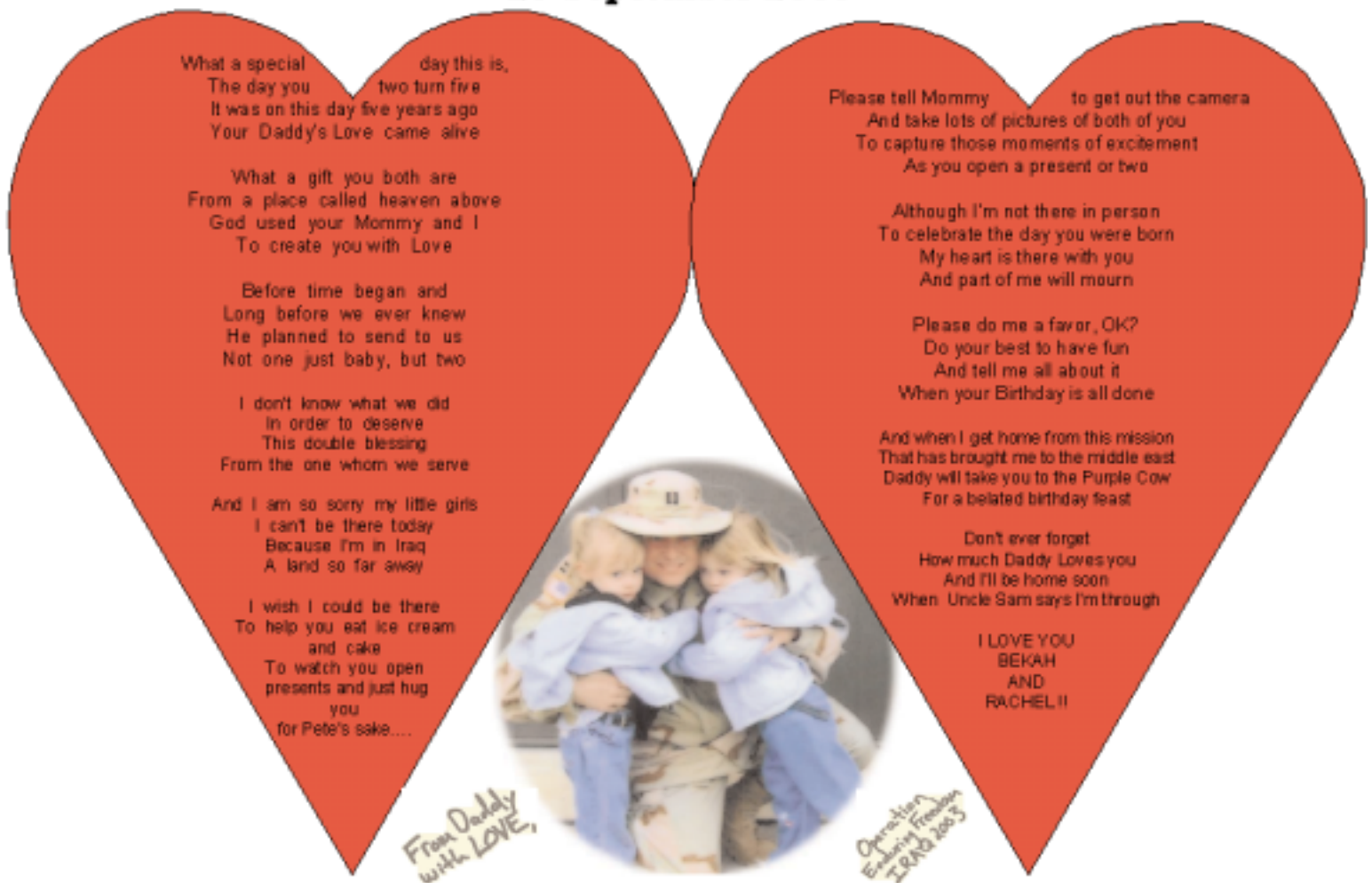


Making memories

90th soldiers in Iraqi,

Bekah and Rachel's 5th Birthday

20 September 2003



Capt. Scott Barnett of the 607th Military Police Battalion, Grand Prairie, Texas, sent this to his twin daughters for their 5th birthday. Barnett and the 607th deployed to Iraq in March.

Enduring Freedom



Soldiers from 90th Regional Readiness Command units who are deployed in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedoms try to participate in normal, day-to-day activities even though they are far from home. In the left photo, Sgt. Mark H. Townsend of the 607th Military Police Battalion was baptized as a member of the Catholic Church recently in Iraq. His wife, Sharon, said of her husband, "I'm very proud of him. He is not only committed to his country and family, but he is now committed to God and his faith." In the bottom photo, members of the 211th Public Affairs Detachment, deployed to Afghanistan, take a break for a photo op. Pictured are, from left (front) Spc. Gwen Holmes, Staff Sgt. Robert Ramon and Sgt. 1st Class Angelita Colon-Francia. (back) Spc. Alex Delgado, Master Sgt. Mark Rodgers, Staff Sgt. Tess Spagna, Capt. Steven Moon, Master Sgt. John Thompson and Staff Sgt. Ron Burke.



Family Matters

By Linda Sholar
Family Program Advisory Council



Since this is my first column in the Tough 'Ombre magazine, I want to introduce myself. My husband, Ron, is the new commander of the 90th RRC. While we are not strangers to the 90th RRC (he was the Deputy CG for three years before this assignment), this is a new role for him and me. I have met many of you at Family Academies, Commanders' Workshops or unit activities, but in an organization that is 17,000 strong, I obviously have not had the opportunity to meet all of you.

My claim to fame according to Gen. Bockel, is being Jane Bockel's "partner in crime." During our joint time at the 90th we became the best of friends and I, like many of you, miss the Bockels. I share Jane's love for soldiers and their families and I promised her I would continue her tradition of writing Family Matters.

I met and married my husband while we were in college at the University of Tennessee. When, at graduation, I pinned his 2nd Lt. bars on, neither of us thought that someday I would be pinning on his second star. He signed on the dotted line to serve in the military, but the past 32 years have been a family commitment. Like many of you, I have supported my spouse by sometimes being both mom and dad at our two children's school and sports events, by participating in military Family Days, and volunteering with Family Readiness Groups. While this has not always been easy, I understand the importance of my participation and support and the benefits are always greater than my efforts.

I have had several experiences this summer that make me so proud of our soldiers and of you, the families of soldiers. In August we attended the 90th Division World War II Reunion. We talked with and listened to the stories of our heroes, those who have been characterized "the greatest generation."

Without taking anything away from what they did, we shared with them the role of the 90th soldiers and families as you continue their legacy of liberation. We have daily reminders that the price of freedom is very high. But with many 90th reservists deployed, we are doing our share in this war and in the rebuilding of Iraq.

At the Family Academy in Dallas, I visited with many spouses of deployed soldiers. I saw in them an intense desire to learn everything they could to better handle life without their soldier. I saw young wives and mothers who are functioning and functioning well on an inner strength that even they had not known they possessed. Considering all they are dealing with, they also had a strong bond with others who are going through the same thing, and they each told how they are looking out for one another. I don't pretend to know the pain and frustrations they and many of you have. But know that I am so proud of you and am an advocate for you. I want you to have the tools that prepare you for soldiers to be away and the tools that will help you when they return.

Our commitment to the rebuilding of Iraq promises to be long. The mission of our soldiers is readiness...and basic to their readiness is family readiness.

Make sure you have discussed the possibility of mobilization with your soldier spouse and be informed about legal protections and military benefits in the event your soldier is deployed. Do you have military ID cards? Is the family enrolled in DEERS? Are your important documents (deeds, titles, birth certificates, immunization records, insurance policies, will, power of attorney and banking information) in a safe place? Do you understand these documents? Is there a local Family Readiness Group at your unit and are you involved?

Some of our soldiers have returned or will be returning from deployment. While we hope life could pick up where it left off, in reality the environment is now different. Those our soldiers left behind are changed and our soldiers, too, are changed. The soldier will return to a more independent family, new rules in the household, possibly a different work environment, many mixed feelings and possibly a sense of profound loss. Soldiers will never be able to recapture the things missed while away.

There are support systems designed to provide assistance for deployment and reunion. Family Life chaplains are available in every unit. Army Community Services, Family Support Centers, Family Program Coordinators and Directors are also available to assist families. Take advantage of the support systems. If you have questions on how to access these services contact your local unit or your Family Program Advisory Council representative. The members of the council and the Family Program Director are listed below. **We are here for you.**

Family Program Advisory Council
90th RRC Family Support Director – Maj. Angel Liberg
(501) 771-7838/7322

172nd Corps Readiness Group – **Sam Bennett**
90th Regional Readiness Group – **Carol Dorrough, Pat Moore, Bianca Puga**
420th Engineer Brigade – **Martha Kirkpatrick**
377th Theatre Support Command – **Nancy Long**
460th Chemical Brigade – **Suzi McNeely**
HHC, 90th Regional Readiness Command – **Deborah Westmoreland**
807th Medical Brigade – **Shirley Taylor**
95th Division – **Orville Warren**
348th Personnel Group – **Gloria Matthias**
Adviser – **Linda Sholar**



Near death experience helps others

By Spc. Brian Raley
343rd MPAD

Few people have faced death so closely as Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Jerry W. Creek, and then lived to talk about it.

Creek is the commander of the 112th Chaplain Detachment of the 90th Regional Readiness Command in North Little Rock, Ark. He has made a remarkable recovery from injuries he sustained on Feb. 7 when an 18-wheeler hit him while he was driving on Highway 67 near Texarkana, Ark.

"I don't even remember where I was going," Creek said. "I know I was going toward downtown Texarkana (Arkansas) on Highway 67, where Summerhill crosses 67, and the 18-wheeler ran a red light and ran over me."

The truck knocked Creek's automobile through four lanes of traffic and into a curb on the opposite side of the road. "When a lady called in the accident, the operator asked if an ambulance was needed," Creek said. "She replied with, 'there's no need, just send a hearse.'"



Lt. Col. Jerry Creek

Creek suffered numerous injuries, including two broken bones in his lower back and a broken rib. The most severe injury was brain trauma, which affected his memory and motor skills. He was in intensive care for several days until he was moved to a rehabilitation center for three months. He still goes for checkups to see if his injuries continue to heal properly. Creek said his toughest challenge during rehabilitation was not being able to minister.

Creek is an Associational Missionary and works with more than 40 churches and 17 missionaries. "I want to be able to do my ministry, to be able to preach every Sunday, and to be able to do my Army Reserve chaplaincy," he said.

Though the accident nearly killed him, he is using his story as a testimony in sermons across the state of Arkansas. "It's increased my faith and

it's been a wonderful thing to let people know that I have been through enough to know God is enough," says Creek. "That's true to my Baptist association, to the Army and my Army chaplaincy."

WE from page 11—

got a job as a door gunner and got interested in helicopters. I spent the rest of my tour in Vietnam as a door gunner for A Company, 227th for the 1st Cav."

He said the experience left him with mixed emotions.

"Vietnam had some bad impacts on me, but it also had some positive. I can understand what the price of freedom is and I sincerely respect the guys that are going to be 18, 19-years-old forever."

When Whittaker returned from Vietnam he got out of the Army for a short time and found civilian life was not for him.

To cope with the things he had endured in Vietnam, Whittaker tried to suppress his memories. He tried to work and stay busy to keep his mind off of it. "I guess the hardest thing was not being accepted at home. I tried to distance myself from all that, but, that was the way we felt," he said.

Whittaker rejoined the Army and went to helicopter flight school.

"Of course, that was like volunteering for Vietnam again because we were all going over there, he said. I went back to Vietnam as a warrant officer. Out of my class, 22 guys were killed in action."

Whittaker logged more than 2,200 hours flight time while in Vietnam and believes his experience as an infantryman

made him a much better pilot. He said his helicopter was hit by enemy fire on several missions. "One time we counted 131 holes in the aircraft and nobody was hurt," he recalled.

On one occasion, Whittaker's helicopter was hit with some type of propelled explosive device, "It passed underneath the aircraft and exploded on the far side. It jerked us and popped all the rivet points. Myself and a young captain were flying. We just grabbed the controls, neutralled the pedals, got a handle on it and wrestled it to the ground."

Whittaker made a second emergency landing after the tail rotor driveshaft had been shot in two. He hit the runway so fast it burned the skids off the aircraft.

Whittaker credits his ability to maintain control of such heavily damaged aircraft to the training he received, "The training was excellent. You just have to train to a point where it becomes second nature. That's why the training we do now is so important. You train as you fight. That's altruism. If you learn bad habits in training, you will carry them into combat."

Almost three decades passed before Whittaker could bear a visit to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in 1999, "I've been to Washington a hundred times, but I could

never bring myself to go to the wall. My buddies from A Company finally got me to the wall."

While looking at photos from the book, "We were soldiers once...and young," Whittaker explained, "Where the wall comes together, the right panel, there's all these guys. They were the first ones there; the first big loss in the first column, the first panel."

Repercussions from war have long lasting effects. Perhaps the best way to prevent history from repeating itself is to learn from it. There are still many veterans of war serving our country who could teach young soldiers.

After leaving Vietnam, Whittaker received a battle field commission before going to Germany.

Due to a reduction in forces, he was forced out of the active component. He then continued his military career through service in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

He was mobilized for one more combat tour while in the 416th Engineer Command during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Whittaker retired as a lieutenant colonel, but he remembers when "We were soldiers once...and young."

(The first of a two-part series)



TOUGH 'OM

4010th hospital unit conducts successful STX in Louisiana

By Sgt. Ashleigh Balot
215th MPAD

The 4010th U.S. Army Hospital from New Orleans conducted a situational training exercise Sept. 16-17.

The unit used two courses on the Camp Leroy Johnson grounds to train and evaluate its soldiers.

Eight teams, each lead by an officer and an NCO, moved through various challenges designed to mimic real-life battlefield scenarios. While practicing the basic soldier skills of land navigation, cover and concealment, and tactical movement, the teams were challenged by such obstacles as mock chemical attacks and open fire.

Upon successful arrival at their rally point, the teams were faced with the additional challenge of triage treating and evacuating multiple casualties. NCO observers evaluated the soldiers on their ability to stabilize several casualties with limited supplies and to request an evacuation team over the radio.

The 4010th STX is an annual event that serves as a guideline for the following year's training calendar.

54th Military History Detachment activated in New Orleans

Sgt. Vanessa M. Bagley
54th Military History Det.

The 54th Military History Detachment in New Orleans was activated Sept. 17 after a year spent recruiting personnel, establishing records and requisitioning equipment.

The three-person detachment, commanded by Capt. David M. Richardson, is the 17th of its kind in the Army Reserve.

Military history detachments collect and preserve the materials used to produce the Army's official histories. MHD soldiers capture data first hand by recording interviews and shooting photographs, and also collect documents such as maps, newspapers, operational reports and staff journals from individual units.

Unit historical programs exist at all echelons of the Army because of the value of military history. Studies of past operations can advance strategic and tactical theory, improve training, increase pride among soldiers and promote understanding among the public.

MHDs are a resource for information and guidance in implementing unit historical programs.

The 54th MHD soldiers have all trained in the public affairs area at the Defense Information School at Fort George G. Meade, Md.

Tough 'Ombre run applications taken through Dec. 10

The Tough 'Ombre 10K run, the oldest certified running race in Texas, will be held at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 13, at McAllister Park in San Antonio. USA Track and Field certifies the course, and it will start at Pavilion 2 in McAllister Park, which is located at 13102 Jones-Maltsberger in San Antonio. The race will be run rain or shine. Other events include a 5K run and walk. Four person teams are allowed in the 10K.

Entry fees are \$20 for the 10K run or \$15 for the 5K. It is \$70 for a 4-person team in the 10K event.

Individuals or teams must preregister by Dec. 10. Ages 15 and above are invited to participate in five categories; open women's, open men's, open mixed, military men's, military women's, and military mixed.

For more information call Cheryn at 210-691-1394.

90th environmental office releases annual policy

The 90th Regional Readiness Command, in support of the military mission, will employ cost-effective measures to protect and sustain the environment while conducting responsible installation management, officials said in making the command's environmental policy statement recently.

The 90th will strive to fully integrate environmental requirements into its mission procedures and work practices so that environmental awareness, compliance, and pollution prevention are a routine part of its operations.

90th RRC ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

■Mission enhancement through continual improvement of the Environmental Management System.

■Conserving and protecting natural and cultural resources.

■Conducting operations that sustain our environment and enhance the quality of life for both soldiers and civilians.

■Taking into consideration environmental factors in purchasing, operating, and planning decisions.

■Preventing pollution before it is produced, reducing the amount of waste our facilities produce, and ensuring the safe treatment and disposal of waste.

■Allocating resources, providing appropriate training, and educating employees to be environmentally responsible.

■Complying with applicable laws and regulations and other requirements and implementing programs and standard procedures to assure compliance.

The 90th RRC will review its progress annually and will continuously seek opportunities to improve its environmental performance, and it will periodically report progress to higher headquarters. This policy will be communicated to all employees.

BRE BRIEFS

Command offers 'one-stop' education services for troops

The Army Reserve is leading the way in providing voluntary education services, programs and benefits. The tuition assistance program at the 90th Regional Readiness Command has been a resounding success, doubling in size each of the last two years.

Effective in September, Army Reserve Troop Program Unit (TPU) soldiers now have a "one-stop" education services website at <https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil>. The 2xcitizen website will enable soldiers to request tuition assistance (TA), obtain an Army/A.C.E. Registry Transcript System (AARTS) transcript, complete a personal education survey for career/degree advising and link to all of the other Army Education and Veterans Administration (VA) education websites.

The 2xcitizen website is the only method for TPU soldiers to request tuition assistance. All soldiers will be required to have an Army Knowledge Online (AKO) account to participate in the tuition assistance program. The AKO account will also be an excellent means of corresponding with the staff in the education services office.

Although the 2xcitizen website provides an excellent method of requesting TA, the 90th RRC education services office has additional requirements and procedures that soldiers must follow to properly complete their TA request package.

Tuition assistance for Fiscal Year 2004 has increased to \$250 per semester hour with a yearly cap of \$4,500 per soldier.

Procedures and requirements are at www.usarc.army.mil/90thRRC.

In addition to the websites listed above, there are several other valuable websites that will provide excellent information on specific programs. Listed below are the websites soldiers may need to obtain additional education information:

VA Education Benefits (Montgomery GI Bill):

<http://www.gibill.va.gov/education>

Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP):

<https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/soldierservices/pay/studentloanrepay.asp>

College Credit - Military Training and Experience:

<https://aarts.army.mil>

DANTES Distance Learning/College Level (CLEP PREP) Professional Certification:

<http://www.dantes.doded.mil>

COOL (Credentialing Opportunities Online)

<http://www.cool.army.mil>

Army Correspondence Courses:

https://www.aimsrdl.atsc.army.mil/secured/accp_top.htm

Army Medical Education Resources:

<http://healthcare.goarmy.com>

Troop to Teachers:

<http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/ttt/tttpromotion.htm>

Computer Based Training:

<https://www.atrrs.army.mil/channels/eLearning/smartforce>

Schools That Recognize Military Training:

<http://www.soc.aascu.org>

More information may be obtained by calling a toll free number: 1-800-501-1493, Ext. 7824. The FAX number is: (501) 812-1207. You may also call Mr. Timothy Watterson, Education Services officer (501) 771-7340; Ms. Pamela Stewart (501) 771-7367; Ms. LaTanya Hunter (501) 771-8963; Mr. Roy "Mac" McCollum (501) 771-8705, or Ms. Lisa Traylor (501) 771-7386.

Retention, Transition office hits milestones during FY 2003

The 90th Regional Readiness Command Retention and Transition Division had a banner year in Fiscal Year 2003.

Among the accomplishments, the reten-

tion personnel:

■ Placed 38 Army Reserve soldiers into the Army Recruiting Command and the Retention and Transition Program for a total of 158 percent mission accomplishment.

■ Put 44 soldiers into the Army Reserve Warrant Officer Program to fill the command's warrant officer vacancies for a 100 percent mission accomplishment.

■ Moved 1,360 soldiers from the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) into the command's units for 91 percent mission accomplishment, greatly improving the readiness of the 90th RRC.

■ Provided individual career counseling throughout the five-state area for more than 22,000 soldiers. This professional counseling was instrumental in reducing the attrition rate in Fiscal Year 2003.

"The long hours and dedicated teamwork of the 90th Retention and Transition Division did not go unnoticed," said Lt. Col. Kenneth Cole, chief, Retention and Transition. "It was a job well done."

All soldiers in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana and New Mexico are encouraged to continue to support your local Center Retention and Transition NCO's with referrals of prior service Soldiers. The website is:

http://www.usarc.army.mil/retn/90RSC/90_default.htm

Commanders urged to use copies of 'Ready Now' video

The new USAR video "Ready Now," which tells the story of the Army Reserve, is available on the 90th Network File System (NFS). VHS cassettes were mailed to each MSC and will be mailed to 90th units soon.

The seven-minute video depicts Army Reserve soldiers as they train at home and serve overseas. It is designed to be a multi-purpose product that can be used to brief civilian audiences as well as introduce new Reserve soldiers to the military.



